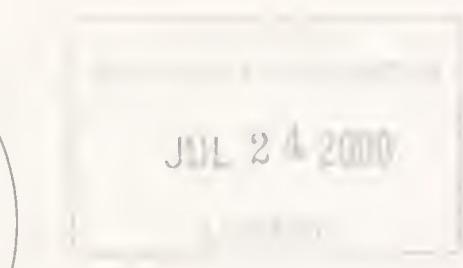


# The Gull

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter



Volume 65 Number 4 August 2000

## We Knew It Was True

By Arthur Feinstein, Executive Director

**W**hen the Navy announced the closing of the Alameda Naval Air Station, Golden Gate Audubon and its members seemed to be the only people who knew just how valuable a wildlife resource the air station had become. With the College of Alameda, we held a scientific symposium that revealed the air station's immense wildlife values. The symposium revealed that the site hosts one of the most important California Least Tern nesting colonies in the world, that 1,400 Brown Pelicans at a time roost on the Alameda breakwater, and that substantial Caspian Tern and California Gull nesting colonies exist on the site, not to mention the other 100 bird species to be found there. Faced with this wealth of nature, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) decided to make Alameda a National Wildlife Refuge.

Now we have further validation of the value of the site. The American Bird Conservancy has just announced that the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge has been designated a **Globally Important Bird Area (IBA)**.

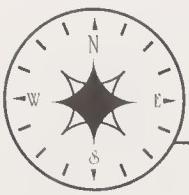
What is an IBA? The IBA concept was developed in the 1980s by the esteemed organization BirdLife International. Recognizing that approximately two thirds of all bird populations in the world are declining, BirdLife International began a program to systematically and scientifically identify and protect critical bird habitats. These habitats were called Important Bird Areas or IBAs. The IBA program designates sites that range from small areas providing habitat for a single endangered species to extensive migration stopovers, flyways, or other areas that support a large concentration of species.

An IBA can have a level of significance ranging from state, national, continental, or global. All levels are important. Nonetheless, it is gratifying but daunting (the responsibility for protection being all the greater) to know that our Alameda Refuge has been granted the highest level of significance, i.e., **global**.

The fact that the site will soon be a National Wildlife Refuge (the Navy and the USFWS are still working out the transfer agreement) is a great help in preserving the resource values of the site, but great challenges remain. As Alameda develops the remaining former Naval land areas that surround the Refuge, we will face unanticipated effects, such as increased need for security from trespassers or the need to control the amount of new night-lighting that can make the Least Tern colony more visible to predators.

The Global IBA designation lets the world know that we have at Alameda a resource that should be treasured. It will be our role to help our community appreciate this wonderful resource and to ensure that the Refuge receives the protection and management that it deserves. We'll need all of your help to achieve this goal. With your help, we will preserve this wonderful site for future generations to appreciate, and we will ensure a home for the wildlife that depend on the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge.

A great big thank you is in order for GGAS volunteers Mary Schaefer and John Luther, who worked long hours to collect and organize all the data needed to complete the detailed IBA application form. Without their efforts, the Refuge's well-deserved Global IBA classification would not have been awarded.



# Field Trips Calendar

## Sunday July 2, STRYBING ARBORETUM, SF.

See June Gull for details. Leaders: Allen Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

## Tuesday July 4, FORT FUNSTON, LAKE MERCED, SF.

See June Gull for details. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074.

## Saturday July 23, PRESIDIO BIRDS, SF.

What species live in San Francisco's largest expanse of open space? Meet at 7:30 am at Inspiration Point, just north of the Arguello Gate to the Presidio, to find out. Expect Hooded Orioles, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Pygmy Nuthatch, California Quail, Forster's Tern, and Purple Finch. This is an excellent trip for beginners to meet our common coastal birds. The leader will also point out fall migrant traps to help you plan your fall birding. We will end by noon. Be prepared for possible cool coastal conditions, and bring water. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229. [harry\\_fuller@zd.com](mailto:harry_fuller@zd.com).

## Saturday-Sunday, July 29-30, YOSEMITE ALPINE ECOLOGY.

See June Gull for details. Leader: George Peyton (510) 433-2600 weekdays.

## Sunday August 6, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8 am at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month halfday trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "microhabitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. Beginners and all oth-

ers welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridsey and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

## START Sunday August 20, ARROWHEAD MARSH, Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline.

Meet at 9:30 am for this 3 hour trip. From Berkeley, take Hwy 880 to Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle and turn right. Turn right on Swan Way. Turn left after a block and take the dirt road to the last parking lot. Expect returning migrant shorebirds as well as local breeders, perhaps Clapper Rail. Leader Courtenay Peddle. (510) 532-8911 (before 8 pm). [capeddle@there.net](mailto:capeddle@there.net)

## Friday - Monday, August 25-28, BACKPACKING TRIP IN LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.

See June Gull for details. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details contact David Rice at (510) 527-7210 or [drice@jps.net](mailto:drice@jps.net).

## Sunday August 27, TILDEN REGIONAL PARK, Berkeley.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot for this half-day trip. Enter the park from either Canyon Drive (where Spruce meets Wildcat Canyon Rd.) or Shasta Rd., off Grizzly Peak Blvd. in Berkeley and follow the signs to the Nature Center at the north end of the park. We will explore Jewel Lake and other areas. Tilden should be alive with migrant warblers, vireos, flycatchers as well as resident birds. Beginners welcome. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936. [Rscalf@jps.net](mailto:Rscalf@jps.net)

## Sunday September 3, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of

the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

## Monday September 4, COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO.

Bird the ocean's edge and inland treetops in search of residents and fall migrants. Birds seen on recent trips include: Wandering Tattler, both Turnstones, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Sooty Shearwaters, Hermit Warbler, Western Tanager, Acorn Woodpecker (an SF rarity) and four species of flycatchers. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot on Merrie Way (a stub street off the north end of the Great Highway) in San Francisco. Fog and wind always possible. We'll finish at noon. Beginners welcome. Please make reservations. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229. [harry\\_fuller@zd.com](mailto:harry_fuller@zd.com)

## Saturday September 9, COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO.

Meet at 8:a.m. in the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Avenue and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in the park, at Lake Merced, and in Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of warblers, flycatchers and vagrants. Bring lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Beginners welcome. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074.

# Our First Field Guide

By Harry Fuller

**I**t is almost a century since American birders got their first modern field guide. A pocket-sized guide to all the species of an area, with brief descriptions and many illustrations, it was the *Handbook of Birds of the Western United States*. That book was a first step toward today's succinct, color-illustrated guides, with range maps and field marks called out. It was written by avid amateur Florence Merriam Bailey (1855–1942). Her whole life had been leading her to the several books she wrote about birds.

Living in upstate New York, the Merriam family was well off, and all its members were interested in natural science. Florence's older brother, C. Hart Merriam, became the first head of the Biological Survey and was an expert on mammals. One of his talented field biologists was Vernon Bailey, whom Florence married in 1899. The Baileys spent much of their life together on expeditions to the western United States. She knew our birds well from firsthand observation.

Mrs Bailey's first bird book had been *A-Birding on a Bronco* (1896). It tells of her birding observations while riding a horse about the land of a ranch in San Diego County during a convalescence from tuberculosis. Earlier she spent some weeks with family friends in Palo Alto where, although not formally enrolled, she had attended classes at Stanford University.

The year she married, Florence published *Birds Through an Opera Glass* (1899). That was a departure from the typical bird books of her day, which were written for egg or skin collectors. She did not assume that interesting birds would be shot and "collected." Yet, it was another 20 years before binoculars largely replaced the gun among bird students.

The publication in 1902 of the *Handbook* was clearly a bridge from the old era to a new one. Vernon Bailey contributed a lengthy introduction that gave detailed instructions on how to kill, treat, and preserve bird skins. Mrs Bailey added a brief section on the life zones (boreal, sonoran, and transitional) that were first denoted by her brother. Finally, the book contained a section on the importance of bird protection. The first federal bird protection law had taken effect only 2 years earlier. The conservation arguments were made by T. S. Palmer, another Biological Survey scientist and long-time secretary of the new American Ornithologists Union (AOU). Although her own brother was an AOU cofounder, Mrs Bailey was not elected as a fellow until 1929, at age 66, she became the first woman selected. By then, she had already published her last bird book, the definitive *Birds of New Mexico* (1928).

Two of Mrs Bailey's books were illustrated by the young Louis Agassiz Fuertes—*A-Birding* and *Handbook*. Fuertes was this country's best-known and perhaps finest bird artist between John James Audubon and Roger Tory Peterson. Fuertes had been discovered and his career promoted by the aged Elliott Coues. It was through Coues that he came to work on the Bailey books, and they were a great boost to his nascent career.

What makes the *Handbook* a landmark? It was the first to give the simple measurement (in inches) of each species, a key fact for field comparison. Although some scientific terms like "mandible" and "emarginate" were used, descriptions of each species were clear and understandable. The *Handbook* gave easy-to-find, brief descriptions of distribution, nest, and food.

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## Wednesday September 13, MINI-TRIP TO ALAMEDA SOUTH SHORE and surrounding areas.

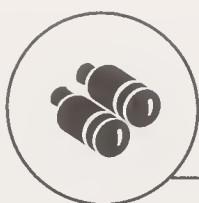
Anna Wilcox (510)-551-9501 and Jean-Marie Spoelman of Ohlone Audubon have kindly agreed to another season of their wonderful "mini-trips" to 10 important East Bay birding locations. For this first trip of the season, meet at 9:30 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Drive. We will be looking for shorebirds and waterfowl. This trip often produces Clapper Rail and a dozen or more species of shorebirds. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one.

## Saturday September 23, LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS, Marin.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot for this half-day trip. Take 101 north and exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road off ramp. Go east on Smith Ranch Road to the end. Take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds, just before the county park. Drive past the headquarters to the parking lot on the left. We will see a variety of water birds, raptors, and who knows what in migration. Beginners welcome. Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001. Rlewis0727@aol.com.

**Trips marked with a (\$)** go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with (\*).

**Problems, etc:** Problems, etc.: If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Anthony Fisher, Field Trips Committee Chair, (510) 658-8769. Loveisant@aol.com. For complete information on all current field trips contact the GGAS website [Goldengate.ca.audubon.org](http://Goldengate.ca.audubon.org) email Anthony Fischer.



## Treating Stunned Birds

The month of May has been a feast for baby birds as well as for bird-watchers. My feeders look like Grand Central Station, with assorted birds, small and large, competing. Most of the babies appear larger than their frazzled parents. Mom and Pop have been so busy keeping all those mouths fed that they haven't had time to groom themselves, let alone to feed themselves. The youngsters aren't really bigger but seem so because of their fluffed-out feathers and casual postures.

It doesn't take long for the fledglings to learn the ropes at the free fastfood stand at Chez Pauletich. The suet feeder is particularly tricky for nuthatch, chickadee, and Nuttall's woodpecker babies. It doesn't stand still! With trepidation, they are gradually testing their balance and seem to enjoy the ensuing swing on the suet cage. Chickadees are fearless, and the young ones are extremely curious and unafraid of people. They and the nuthatches are in constant communication with their entire families.

I had a call from a local woman who is lucky enough to have White-tailed Kites nesting in her pine tree. These beautiful hawktype birds were endangered at the same time as Peregrine Falcons and Brown Pelicans (from the effects of DDT on their eggs). Now, like the others, they have been making a great comeback and are expanding their range so that they can be seen all around the Bay Area.

Along with the enjoyment of watching the progress of the bird families in my yard came sadness. Two young Nuttall's woodpeckers hit the window of a French door. One died immediately, and I took the other to the Lindsay Museum, but it

didn't survive either. I surmise that as inexperienced fliers, they took off from the tree, which is 8 ft away. They must have been fooled by the reflection of sky and trees in the glass. Because woodpeckers typically swoop down as they fly, I'm sure the glass loomed up as the young birds were rising from the swoop. The museum sent home some suggestions with me, which I'd like to pass along.

Birds often hit windows because they see the reflections of trees, bushes, or sky and not the glass. Because of the speed at which they strike the window, they often die instantly or later, of head injuries. Estimates are that 95 MILLION birds become casualties each year in the United States. That figure stunned me!

What to do? Pick up the stunned bird and place it in a paper bag with a paper towel in the bottom. Place the closed bag in a warm, quiet place. If after 15 minutes the bird has recovered, release it outside. If it is still in shock, take it to a wild animal rescue center as soon as possible. DO NOT feed it.

If this happens more than once, you may prevent it in several ways:

- Cover the outside of your window with black garden netting in a frame about a foot out from the window.
- Hang closely spaced streamers on the outside of window, attached at top and bottom.
- Let your window remain dirty so it isn't reflective. (This one is easy!)
- Eliminate items near the window that attract birds to your yard, i.e., food, water, or esthetic vegetation.
- For new construction, you can angle window panes so that the ground, not the sky or landscape, is reflected.

I felt terrible when the second little guy hit the same window. I have a pulldown shade on that window that I am keeping in place for the time being. I take such pleasure in feeding, watering, and housing my local birds. But I feel guilty for putting some of the young ones in jeopardy. I hope this column will save a few birds' lives. Meanwhile, enjoy the rites of late spring in the happening world of wildlife.

## Donations

### Golden Eagle (\$1000 or more)

David Hudson

### Least Tern (\$200 or more)

Ann M. and Harlan Ricther  
Janette and John Dang

### Clapper Rail (\$100 or more)

Elsbeth Nagel

### Gifts (to \$99)

Nancy Davis Szymanski  
Marian Tee  
Rebecca and John Coolidge  
Ruth Doty

### In Memoriam

Rosemarie Hafford Tee, in memory of Ruth Brown, who favored Chickadees.

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping to preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS Office for more information. Our phone number is 510-843-2222. Thanks.

# Our Save the Quail Campaign Gets a Big Boost, and You Can Help!

Our efforts to preserve and restore the San Francisco's shrinking California Quail population received a big boost on May 15, 2000, when the San Francisco Commission on the Environment (COE) voted to adopt our resolution endorsing Golden Gate Audubon's Save the Quail Campaign (the full text of the COE resolution is printed below). As part of this resolution, the Commission recommends that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors designate the California Quail as the official bird of San Francisco.

Supervisor Leslie Katz is going to carry this resolution to the Board of Supervisors. Please write to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urging them to vote yes on this resolution. The address is:

**San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
C/O City Clerk  
One Dr. Carlton Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689**

As you may know, San Francisco's quail population is nearly gone. Unfortunate decisions in the management of our parks has resulted in a diminution of habitat suitable for the quail. If these beautiful birds are to survive in our city, we need to restore this habitat wherever possible. There are actually several places where this may be done: Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, McLaren Park, and the Presidio—to name some of the most familiar. GGAS has already held a successful planting day to restore or enhance quail habitat in Golden Gate Park and had many more volunteers than we expected. So there is hope.

Having the California Quail declared the City Bird should help focus SF agencies on implementing appropriate management and habitat restoration practices. So please take the time to write a short letter. We thank you for your help and, if they could, the quail would thank you, too. Below is a sample letter:

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Please vote to make the California Quail the official bird of San Francisco. It is one of our state's most beautiful birds and, as such, it is an appropriate symbol for one of our state's most beautiful cities.

Sincerely yours,

Resolution No. 009-00-COE May 15, 2000

## ENDORsing THE SAVE THE QUAIL CAMPAIGN

WHEREAS the California Quail (*Callipepla californica*) is the official state bird of California; and,

WHEREAS the quail is native to San Francisco, its current population being descended from the quail that were here before European contact; and,

WHEREAS the California Quail is significant to our cultural history and our natural heritage, as quail were an important food source to the Ohlone people and to the early settlers; and,

WHEREAS recent quail counts in parks across San Francisco reveal a major citywide decline over the past 150 years; and,

WHEREAS in Golden Gate Park, there has been a 50% decline in the quail population since 1998 and a drop in numbers from 1,500 birds in 1900 to 12 birds in February 2000; and,

WHEREAS quail no longer reside at Lincoln Park, Lake Merced and Harding Park, Stern Grove and Pine Lake Park, and presumably other areas, where they were once numerous; and,

WHEREAS the California Quail is in danger of being extirpated from San Francisco County due to continued loss of suitable and sustainable habitat and the introduction of invasive non-native plants, and, if extirpated, will not repopulate on its own; and,

WHEREAS the Sustainability Plan for the City of San Francisco emphasizes that protecting our city's biodiversity is essential to the ecological health of the ecosystems found here and includes the following goals: to protect and restore remnant natural ecosystems and to protect sensitive species and their habitats and support their recovery in San Francisco; and,

WHEREAS the Golden Gate Audubon Society has developed a program called the "Save the Quail Campaign" to increase quail populations in appropriate open spaces throughout the City through hands-on habitat enhancement stewardship for residents of all ages and cultures;

*Continues on page 10*

# Berkeley Birds, 60 Years Ago and Now (A Chickadee Club Research Project)

John Poole

Two fourth-grade students at Jefferson Elementary School in Berkeley, Emma Cox and Isabel Callejo-Brighton, happened on a notebook of Mrs C.E. Gray of Oakland. Mrs Gray kept lists of birds she found on her East Bay walks between 1937 and 1943. On April 27, 1943, for example, Mrs Gray birded the Life Science Building area on the UC Berkeley campus. Her list includes: junco, robins, white-crowned, purple finch, linnet, English sparrow, spotted towhee, russet back thrush, swallows and linnets on their nests, pileolated warbler, and western flycatcher.

On April 7, 1941, Mrs Gray visited Codornices Park in the Berkeley Hills. She saw a total of 26 birds, including: house finch, spotted towhee, both jays, song sparrow,

California towhee, Vigor's wren, robin, Cooper's hawk, pileolated warbler, bushtit, purple finch, western flycatcher, lutescent warbler, golden crowned sparrow, siskin, "hummer," sharp-shinned hawk, goldfinch, wrentit, fox sparrow, Audubon warbler, hermit thrush, Hutton's vireo, quail, and junco.

Emma and Isabel decided to revisit some of the areas birded by Mrs Gray to see how things had changed. The following are their reports submitted as a science fair project.

*John Poole is a science teacher at Jefferson Elementary School and is assisting in the development of future ornithologists.*

## Birds of Codornices Park

By Emma Cox

**C**on Saturday, April 22, 2000, Isabel and I went to Codornices Park to go bird-watching. The environment changed throughout our walk, and as the environment changed, the birds changed.

We entered Codornices Park at the north end of the playground. There were about 50 people. We didn't see any birds here. We walked past some houses. There were no people there then, and we heard a few birds. We walked on and entered a steep canyon. We saw many more birds here. There were more trees and greenery in this area, and there was a stream. There were a lot of pines, redwoods, bay trees, and some oaks. It was shady and cool. The ground was covered with ivy. There were no grasses and no seeds for the seedeaters.

We walked back down the hill to the south end of the park. At the meadow above the slide, we saw a spotted towhee feeding in the grass. We saw birds in the oak trees and brush. We expected to see hummingbirds in the sage by the oaks, but we didn't.

Did we see the same birds as Mrs Gray saw in 1941? We saw some of the same birds. She saw a lot more species than we did. We went out in the same time of year as Mrs Gray, and the weather was the same. Some differences between her observations and our observations were that Mrs Gray went bird-watching in the morning, and we went in the evening. Some of the birds she observed may have only come out in the morning. We may have seen a turkey vulture because they are more active in the evening than in the morning. Mrs Gray was also a more experienced birder than we are. So we may have missed some of the birds that she would have noticed.

Jose Domingo Peralta, Berkeley's first European settler, named Codornices because he hunted quail there. *Codornices* means "quail" in Spanish. Mrs Gray saw quail when she came to the park about 60 years ago. We did not see any. When Mrs Gray visited the park, it was already developed, and the houses that are there today were there 60 years ago. The park and the Rose Garden have not changed much.

# Birdwatching at the University of California Berkeley Campus

By Isabel Callejo-Brighton

I went bird-watching with Emma Cox on Easter Sunday, April 23, 2000, on the U.C. Berkeley campus. We were there from 4:30 pm to 6:15 pm. The weather was sunny, warm, and breezy. We observed in the west part of campus around the Valley Life Science Building. In this area there are different kinds of trees: live oak, eucalyptus, pines, and redwoods. There was also open grassy areas. Just west of this building, the North and South Forks of Strawberry Creek meet and form the main Strawberry Creek. We were comparing observations by Mrs Gray on April 27, 1943, which was a rainy day. She listed 11 species of birds in her count.

We saw many, many birds. I identified these: American robins, house finches (also called linnets), purple finches, juncos, Anna's hummingbirds, house sparrows, song sparrows, Steller's jays, crows, brown towhees, ruby-crowned kinglets, a black phoebe, and a sharp-shinned hawk. This is 14 species, 3 more than listed by Mrs Gray.

When we came to the Life Sciences Building, we saw that on the west side there was a colony of about 105 cliff swallow nests. We identified the nests by their shape. They were amazing! It was weird that all of the nests stopped at about the middle of the building. On the other side of the Life Science Building, there were no nests at all. I think the reason was that on the

west side there was mud that the swallows use to build their nests. We didn't see the actual birds, but this must be an ancestral nesting area, which means the birds have been nesting there for many years.

The Valley Life Science building is very old. It has teethlike squares on the edge of it. It has little crevices perfect for little birds like cliff swallows. The newer buildings like Moffitt Library don't have these same details and don't have nests.

In the late 1930s, there were about 14,000 students at UC Berkeley. Around the Life Sciences Building at that time, there were fewer buildings than today. There are now 31,347 students and many more buildings in this part of the campus. These buildings are: The Valley Life Sciences Addition, Moffitt Library, Dwinelle Hall, The Dwinelle Hall parking lot, and Zellerbach Auditorium.

I think the reason Emma and I saw more birds than Mrs Gray is that we went on a sunny, breezy day and Mrs Gray went on a rainy day. I don't know why I saw so many different birds from the ones Mrs Gray saw, and I don't know if this is because of the increase in the number of students and buildings. But the campus still seems to be full of birds, and it is good for the birds to have the campus because they have places to nest and seem to have a good food supply from the trees, creek, and grassy areas.

## Our First Field Guide... Continued from page 3

Although many illustrations are of museum specimens lying on their backs, feet sticking up, there are useful, small line drawings of distinguishing parts of certain species. Often songs or calls are described. The *Handbook* was organized in taxonomic order, not by color or habitat. It was a single volume and inexpensive. Houghton Mifflin wanted it to sell well, and it did. My copy is a 7th edition, dated 1917. The publisher was "warming up" for the Peterson guide that they published in 1934.

After Mrs Bailey's book came Ralph Hoffmann's *Guide to the Birds of New England and Eastern New York* (1904). Twenty-three years later, he published *Birds of the Pacific States*. All those years later, he still thanked Florence Bailey in his preface for being allowed to use measurements from her *Handbook*. Hoffmann explicitly said that his books were to help identify birds "as seen out of doors." He used the term "field marks."

Next came several pocket-sized *Bird Guide* volumes for eastern and western species, land and water. These were written by Chester Reed and published by Doubleday, starting in 1906. Each book is 3x5 in, with a written description and color illustration of 1 species per page, borrowing categories from Mrs Bailey's approach: size, distribution, nest, and note. Reed's small books were used daily in the early 1900s by a group of young birders called the Bronx County Bird Club, of which Peterson would be only the most famous member. Other top ornithologists who started in this group included Joseph Hickey and Allan Cruickshank. Without Bailey's beginning, we might never have gotten to Peterson and modern birding.

Here are some comments in *Handbook* that showed her familiarity with our birds and our area:

"In Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, while the white-crowned

Continues on page 8



# Observations

By Collin G. Murphy, Ph.D.

April 30-May 29, 2000

A few rainy days around the second week of May seemed to stimulate migrant activity. Then a hot, dry period was followed by a return to "normal" (mild) late May weather. A few species, including White-faced Ibis and Brant, had several reports from outside their normal ranges. Unusual wood warbler reports more than doubled over the last period.

## Albatross to Shearwaters

Individual Laysan Albatross were seen on a Monterey Bay pelagic trip, Apr. 30 (MPRBA, DLSH), and on a May 7 pelagic trip off Santa Cruz (DLSH). Others sighted during pelagic trips were 4 off Fort Bragg, MEN, May 20 (ABB), and 8-15 in the same area on the same date (DLSH). Pelagic trips had good counts of Black-footed Albatross, with 128 on Monterey Bay, Apr. 30, 50 on a trip from Santa Cruz May 7, and 480 off Fort Bragg, May 20 (DLSH), with 250 spotted from shore near Ft Bragg, May 20 (ABB). High count for Pink-footed Shearwaters was 17 on Monterey Bay, Apr. 30, whereas 14 out of Santa Cruz, May 7, and 8 out of Ft Bragg, May 20 (DLSH). Other reports were of a single Pink-footed Shearwater flying past Pigeon

Point, SM, May 12 (RT), and 5 of this species seen offshore from Ft Bragg, May 20 (ABB). The Apr. 30 Monterey Bay trip also recorded a Short-tailed Shearwater. As expected for the period, spectacular assemblages of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters were reported by several observers from coastal locations.

## Herons to Skimmers

Odd was a concentration of 17 Great Blue Herons foraging north of Swanton Rd Pond, SCZ, May 16 (DSu). Although there are no known nesting sites for this species nearby, one might be discovered. A Little Blue Heron was reportedly seen near Skywest Golf course, ALA, May 10 (PD). A Cattle Egret found at Tahoe Keyes, Lake Tahoe, ED, Apr. 28, continued until May 1 (TS). The period experienced an unusual influx of White-faced Ibis in coastal locations. Four Humboldt County sites had a total of over 100 birds, with a high count of 75 reported from Ferndale May 19 (ABB). Fourteen or more of this species were also at Crescent City, DN, May 22-27 (EE, ABB). Fourteen White-faced Ibis were at the Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 22 (SJ); 62 were at the Ironhouse

Sanitary District, CC, May 20 (SG); 15 were over Tomales Bay, MRN, May 21 (AM); a single bird was along Ten Mile River, MEN, May 21 (JW); and at the end of the period, up to 7 were at Mitigation Marsh, Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 24-29 (CP, SJ, JBU, CL). A single Greater White-fronted Goose continued near Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, May 7 (MPRBA), and 3 Ross's geese remained at Pinto Lake, SCZ, May 18 (CK). A Brant, unusual inside San Francisco Bay, was feeding at the Emeryville Crescent, ALA, May 6 (ES). Another Brant was at a rare mountain location at Almador Lake, PLU, May 15 (PE), and 5-15 others were inland at Iron House Sanitary District, CC, May 20-21 (SG, JL, CL). A Green-winged Teal of the "Eurasian" race from Siberia was at Moro Cojo Slough, MTY, May 7 (MPRBA). Single Solitary Sandpipers were seen at Ukiah, HUM, Apr. 30 (ABB), and at Pescadero Creek, SM, May 5-13 (RT).

Rare inside San Francisco Bay was a Wandering Tattler at Marina Bay, Richmond, CC, May 7 (NW, LJP), and another inland at Stockton Sewage Ponds, SJ, May 11 (KMi). A Whimbrel of the Asian *variegatus*, or "white-rumped" race, a regular migrant off

## Our First Field Guide... *Continued from page 7*

and golden-crowned sparrows are busy on the lawns, faint notes come from the undergrowth, which on investigation proves to be astir with flocks of diminutive bush-tits..."

"The sharply contrasted black and white plumage of the black phoebe... he is not averse to civilization and may be met commonly just off highways usually near water. I have found him in a San Francisco cemetery [before 1906 quake], in Sutro Heights Park, in Pasadena..."

*Auduboni* [Warbler] is so preoccupied with its hunting that it pays little heed to observers. At Stanford, in December... one had flown in from the rosebushes to the piazza rail near me, looked around for a moment, and then ignoring my presence flown down to the floor and gone hopping jauntily about... looking for insects."

But not everything has remained the same:

Of the American Robin, she could write, "Flocks are sometimes seen eating ivy berries in the cemeteries of San Francisco, but are so timid they hide in the brush in great trepidation on the approach of man." In case we doubt her observation, it helps to remember that in those days, it was still legal to hunt robins.

And in light of today's reality, consider this poignant passage: "The brushy parts of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco abound with quail, and from the benches one can watch the squads of plump hen-like creatures as they move about with stately tread or stand talking sociably in low monosyllables."

# Wood Warbler Sightings

the Alaskan coast, was with a group of 4 other Whimbrels off Pigeon Pt, SM, May 12 (RT). A first-spring **Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemastica*) was found May 26 at the Coyote Creek Field Station, SCL (AJ). Normal migratory range for this species, an Arctic breeder, is through the central and eastern Great Plains. An extremely rare spring transient, the Hudsonian Godwit has only a few No. California records (Small, 1994). One Semipalmated Sandpiper was reported from Pescadero Marsh, SM, May 5 (RT). Two adult Long-tailed Jaegers were spotted on a pelagic trip off Ft Bragg, May 20 (DLSH). Four alternate-plumaged Franklin's Gulls were south of Davenport off Hwy 1, SCZ, Apr. 30 (PM), and 2 others were south of Baldwin Creek, SCZ, May 17 (DSu). The Heermann's Gulls continued at Robert's Lake, Seaside, MTY, May 7 (MPRBA). Ending speculation about whether they would "do it again," an Arctic and a Forster's Tern appear to be a mated pair for the second year in a row at the Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 5-29. At last report, there were 2 eggs in the nest located within a few feet of last year's nest site (BR). An unusual find for the Great Basin was a breeding-plumaged Arctic Tern at Topaz Lake, MONO, May 21 (PM). Encouraging were reports of as many as 15 Least Terns on the new shell islands along the Albany Waterfront Trail, ALA, May 29-30 (LJP, CL, MOb). Black Skimmers continued to spread: 2 were seen at Moro Cojo Slough, MTY, May 7 (MPRBA), and up to 7 were at Hayward Region Shoreline, ALA, May 12-29, with at least 1 pair on a nest (BR, CL). Another Black Skimmer was found at Princeton Harbor, SM, May 23 (AJ). Two more were in waters off Capitola State Beach, SCZ, May 24

## Tennessee Warbler

May 15 Pescadero Creek, SM RT

## Nashville Warbler

May 16 UC Botanical Garden, TC  
ALA

## NoRTern Parula

|           |                                 |        |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--------|
| May 5     | Andrew Molera SP,<br>MTY        | MPRBA  |
| May 3     | Paluighi, HUM                   | ABB    |
| May 6     | Gazos Creek Rd, SM              | AE     |
| May 7     | Big Sur Ornithology<br>Lab, MTY | MPRBA  |
| May 22    | Big Sur Ornithology<br>Lab, MTY | MPRBA  |
| May 27    | Visitor Center,<br>PRNS, MRN    | MD, DS |
| May 27    | Five Brooks, PRNS,<br>MRN       | DS     |
| May 20    | Pescadero, SM                   | RT     |
| May 24    | Russian Gulch, SON              | LH     |
| May 27(2) | Andrew Molera SP,<br>MTY        | MPRBA  |
| May 27    | East Wash, GGNRA,<br>SF         | HC     |

## Chestnut-sided Warbler

|        |                             |               |
|--------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| May 28 | Benton Hot Springs,<br>Mono | JP fide<br>ES |
| May 28 | Pescadero Creek, SM         | RT            |

## Magnolia Warbler

|           |                     |        |
|-----------|---------------------|--------|
| May 16    | Big Lagoon, HUM     | ABB    |
| May 26-27 | Ft Miley, GGNRA, SF | KM, JC |

## Blackburnian Warbler

|        |                             |    |
|--------|-----------------------------|----|
| May 25 | Mendoza Ranch,<br>PRNS, MTY | RS |
|--------|-----------------------------|----|

## Black-and-white Warbler

|        |                    |       |
|--------|--------------------|-------|
| May 7  | Pacific Grove, MTY | MPRBA |
| May 17 | Gazos Creek, SM    | DSu   |
| May 21 | Vista Point, MEN   | JW    |
| May 21 | Oasis Ranch, Mono  | PM    |
| May 25 | Lundy Canyon, Mono | PM    |
| May 28 | Moss Beach, SM     | PM    |

## American Redstart

|        |                          |     |
|--------|--------------------------|-----|
| May 23 | Lighthouse, PRNS,<br>MRN | RS  |
| May 29 | Blue Lake, HUM           | ABB |

## Prothonotary Warbler

|        |                    |    |
|--------|--------------------|----|
| May 17 | Santa Cruz, SCZ    | DB |
| May 27 | Gazos Creek Rd, SM | RT |

## NoRTern Waterthrush

|           |                                 |    |
|-----------|---------------------------------|----|
| May 20-22 | Big Sur Ornithology<br>Lab, MTY | JB |
|-----------|---------------------------------|----|

## Hooded Warbler

|           |  |        |
|-----------|--|--------|
| May 18    | Big Sur Ornithology<br>Lab, Andrew<br>Molera SP, MTY | JB     |
| May 17    | Inverness, MRN                                       | PP     |
| May 27-28 | GGP, SF  | KM, RF |
| May 27    | Mt Davidson, SF                                      | PS     |

**Abbreviations for Observers:** ABB, Arcata Bird Box; DB, David Bockman; JB, Jim Booker; MB, Marj Bourret, BB, Bob Brandriff; JBu, John Bucot, RC, Roy Carlson; LC, Les Chibana; JC, Josiah Clark; TC, Tom Condit; HC, Hugh Cotter; GD, Gary Deghi; MD, Matthew Dodder; PD, Peter Dramer; ME, Mark Eaton; AE, Al Eisner; EE, Elias Elias; PL, Peter Esanctet; MF, Mike Feighner; RF, Rich Ferrick; BF, Brian Fitch; RF, Rebecca Freed; EF, Eric Fuess; SG, Steve Gerow; SG, Steve Glover; PG, Phil Gordon; HH, Hugh Harvey; MH, Merry Haveman; AH, Alice Hoch; JH, Jenny Hough; LH, Lisa Hug; AJ, Al Jaramillo; SJ, Sheila Jung; CK, Clay Kempf; GL, Gloria LeBlanc; JL, John Luther; CL, Calvin Lou; MOb, Many Observers; MM, Mike Marsh; AM, Anne McCanlon; KM, Kevin McKereghan; PM, Peter Metropulos; KMi, Kurt Mize; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; DvN, David Nelson; IO, Irene Orr; EP, Ed Pandolfino; JP, Jim Parker; CP, Courtenay Peddle; LJP, Lina Jane Prairie; EPr, Eddie Prince; PP, Peter Pyle; BRe, Bob Reiling; BR, Bob Richmond; PS, Paul Saraceni; JSc, Jason Scott; SS, Stacy Scott; DLSH, Debra Love Shearwater; DS, Dan Singer; RS, Rich Stallcup; JS, John Sterling; MS, Maury Stern; TS, Tim Steurer; ES, Emilie Strauss; DSu, David Suddjian; ST, Scott Terrill; RTh, Robert Thomas; RT, Ron Thorn; JW, Jerry White; NW, Neil Whitehouse; TW, Terri Willis.

## Abbreviations for Counties and Others:

ALA, Alameda; ALP, Alpine; CC, Contra Costa; DN, Del Norte; ED, El Dorado; GGNRA, Golden Gate National Recreation Area; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; PLA, Placer; PLU, Plumas; PRBO, Point Reyes Bird Observatory; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SAC, Sacramento; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; SP, State Park.

# Bird Feeder Safety

**N**agging doubts about your feeder's placement? Wonder why the neighborhood birds have stopped coming around (when was the last time you cleaned your feeder)? Check out [www.prbo.org](http://www.prbo.org), the website of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, for some commonsense instructions on protecting the birds. —Jan Andersen

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## Our Save the Quail Campaign Gets a Big Boost, ...

Continued from page 5

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Commission on the Environment urges the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco to endorse the Save the Quail Campaign and urges the Recreation and Park Department, the Public Utilities Commission, and other city departments to give the utmost cooperation and support to the Save the Quail Campaign without killing other animals; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission on the Environment urges the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco to designate the California Quail as the Official Bird of the City and County of San Francisco; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission on the Environment urges the Recreation and Park Department to allocate sufficient funds to the Significant Natural Resource

Areas Management Program for the development and implementation of a quail recovery and management plan; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission on the Environment urges the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco to urge the Audubon Society, SPCA, and other interested parties to work together to produce a plan to save the quail.

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Commission on the Environment at its regular meeting on May 15, 2000.

*If you are interested in helping with the GGAS effort to Save the Quail, please call Alan Hopkins at 415-664-0983, or email to ash@sfo.com*

## Brown-headed Cowbirds Invade California

By Harry Fuller

The season of the fledgling is here, and for birders, the presence of Brown-headed Cowbirds this time of year becomes most alarming. Dan Murphy and I were trying recently to recall what we knew about cowbird invasion of California. So I undertook to research this history and came up with this brief summary of "Studies in Avian Biology #15," published by the Cooper Ornithological Society. The summary was written by Stephen Rothstein, who at the time (1994) was in the biology department of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

The cowbirds' communal feeding and notoriously parasitic nesting patterns allow the species to fly many miles daily. Thus, cowbirds can rapidly colonize wide areas when the habitat and food supply allow. As openings have been cut into forests, golf courses have entered former

deserts, and humans have "tamed" the natural world, cowbirds have found the "new order" much to their liking. The Brown-headed Cowbird is supposed to have been a camp follower of buffalo and American Plains Indians. They still tend to follow large, herding mammals, usually grazers. Cowbirds often take insects scared up by horses, buffalo, cattle, golfers, or soccer players. They thrive in areas of mixed habitat, discontinuous forest, pastures, fields, corrals, and the like. Historically, there were no Brown-headed Cowbirds breeding in California.

In the late 1870s, Charles Bendire found them to be rare in the Great Basin, but none were at Malheur, Oregon, where they now abound. There is some speculation that as wagon routes across the Great Basin and Sierra became set, the cowbirds followed the larger migrants westward along the southern trails.

By 1890, cowbirds were in the Great Basin but not yet west of the Sierra. In 1889, they were in the desert east of Los Angeles. In 1905, they were in Los Angeles County; in 1907, the Bakersfield area; in 1911, they were recorded in Fresno and Palo Alto; in 1922, the Fremont area; 1931, Sacramento and Yuba County; 1934, Oakland-Berkeley and Yosemite; in 1941, Eureka; in 1946, Eugene, Oregon; in 1955, Seattle, Washington, and Victoria, British Columbia; and in 1957, Tahoe area.

They are the fastest-spreading native bird in North America during the modern era. If this weren't natural history, it could pass for a horror story by Stephen King.

The author of this history ended with call for cowbird population control to save vireos and flycatchers in California.

## Observations ...

Continued from page 9

(DSu), and another was discovered at Mitigation Marsh, Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline, ALA, May 27-28 (CP, SJ, JBU).

### Nighthawks to Wood Warblers

Rarely seen on the coast, a Lesser Nighthawk flew over Hwy 1 north of Baldwin Creek, SCZ, May 27 (DSu). A single Chimney Swift was spotted over the lighthouse parking lot, PRNS, MRN, May 13 (ST), and another pair was found north of Bishop, MONO, May 21 (PM). Black-chinned Hummingbirds were reported in several locations: 1 on Bethel Island Rd, CC, May 4 (SG); 1 north of Lucia, Hwy 1, MTY, May 4 (MB); others at Indians, MTY, May 7 (MPRBA); 1 on Orwood Rd, CC, May 6 (SG); a few at the Iron House Sanitary District, CC, May 20 (SG); and 2 at Markleeville, ALP, May 21 (JS). Single Costa's Hummingbirds were found in Garrapata State Park, MTY, May 3 (MPRBA), and near Ramsey Gulch, SCZ, May 6 (DSu), and 2 were on Mines Rd, STA, May 6-15 (LC, GL).

Single Willow Flycatchers were at Mitchell Canyon, Mount Diablo State Park, CC, May 15 (BF); at Piper Slough, CC, May 20 (SG); at the East Wash of GGNRA, SF, May 21 (BF); and at Fortuna, HUM, May 29 (ABB). Reports of single Hammond's Flycatchers came from Orick, HUM, Apr. 30 (ABB); Mount Davidson, SF, May 12-15 (PS); Big Sur Ornithology Laboratory, Andrew Molera State Park, MTY, May 17 (MPRBA); Schwan Lake Park, SCZ (DSu); the East Wash, GGNRA, SF, May 21 (BF); and others were seen at Mitchell Canyon, Mt Diablo SP, CC, May 15 (BF). Three Gray Flycatchers were found: on Auburn Ravine Rd, PLA, Apr. 29 (EP); at Big Sur Ornithology Lab, MTY, May 7 (MPRBA); and at Round Valley, CC, May 21 (MS). The Tropical Kingbird first seen Apr. 12 remained at the Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, at least until May 12 (PD, CL, MOb), and another individual first

reported in January continued at Lake Merced, SF, through the end of the period (MII, TO, ST). An Eastern Kingbird was seen at Andrew Molera State Park, MTY, May 29 (RC).

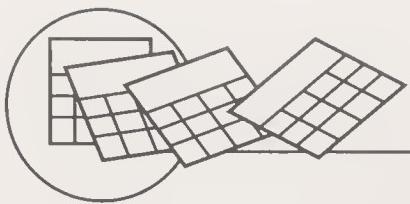
Andrew Molera SP also hosted the Hudsonian Godwit's only competition for best bird of the month, a **White-eyed Vireo** (*Vireo griseus*), May 24-30 (JB, EPr, SS, JSc). This sighting was a second Monterey County record, the other being in 1994. This vireo breeds in the United States from roughly south of the Great Lakes through eastern Texas all the way to the tip of Florida. It is a rare spring transient, with most No. Calif. records from the Marin County coast and the Farallones (Small, 1994). Single Plumbeous Vireos were at McKinleyville, HUM, May 20-29 (ABB), and at Mendoza Ranch, PRNS, MRN, May 23 (RS). This vireo-rich period was rounded out by 4 reports of Red-eyed Vireos: from Natural Bridges SP, SCZ, May 17 (SGe); Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, May 23 (RS); the East Wash, GGNRA, SF, May 22 (BF); and Middle Lake, Golden Gate Park, SF, May 28 (ME). Wood warbler migrants were markedly increased since last period (see chart), with perhaps the most noteworthy the first spring record of a Prothonotary Warbler for Santa Cruz County on May 17.

### Tanagers to Grosbeaks

Three Summer Tanagers were reported during the period: San Lorenze Park, King City, MTY, May 7 (MPRBA); a second banded at Big Sur Ornithology Lab, Andrew Molera SP, MTY, May 13 (MPRBA); and 1 other at the Shinn Park and Arboretum, Fremont, ALA, May 26 (PG, AH, MOb). A Brewer's Sparrow was found along Mines Rd, ALA, May 15 (LC), and another was at Klamath, DN, May 15 (ABB). Mitchell Canyon, Mt Diablo SP, CC, hosted a Black-chinned Sparrow May 15 (BF), and another was at San Antonio Valley Rd, SCL, May 27 (MD). A Black-throated Sparrow was report-

ed from South Lake Tahoe, ED, May 21 (JS). Up to 4 Grasshopper Sparrows continued on Meiss Rd, SAC, May 5-25 (TS, MM), and several were west of Petaluma, MRN, May 20 (ES). A Swamp Sparrow captured and recaptured at Big Sur Ornithology Lab, MTY, May 2-3, was the first county record of a spring migrant of this species (MPRBA). Two White-throated Sparrows were seen: 1 at a residence in Placerville, ED, May 6-8 (JH), and another at a Berkeley, ALA, residence May 22 (RFr).

Six individual Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported over Humboldt, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties. Thirty or more Blue Grosbeaks were found over Alameda, Contra Costa, Mono, Monterey, Sacramento, Santa Clara, Solano, and Stanislaus counties. Indigo Buntings were also abundant, with 7 separate reports: from Mount Burdell Open Space Preserve, MRN, Apr. 30-May 20 (GD, DvN, HH); Oasis Ranch, Mono, May 21 (PM); Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, SM, May 21 (AE); Page Mill Rd, SCL, May 24-26 (BRe, MF); Los Trancos, SCZ, May 28 (EF); Blue Lake, HUM, May 27-29 (ABB); and at Andrew Molera SP, MTY, May 30 (MPRBA). A Dickcissel, a rare coastal transient in Calif. (Small, 1994), appeared at Orick, HUM, May 28 (ABB). Those ambitious Great-tailed Grackles are really going strong. At least 24 birds were reported during the period over Alameda, Contra Costa, Mono, Monterey, Santa Cruz, Stanislaus, and Yolo counties. Of these, perhaps most noteworthy were the reports of a male on the Farallones May 6, for a first islands record (PRBO), and a high count of at least 5 birds (4 males) at McNabney Marsh, CC, May 5-25 (TW, RTh, SG, MOb). Providing a lovely last note for the period was the appearance of a late Evening Grosbeak at a private feeder in Berkeley, ALA, May 24-26 (BB, MF).



# On The Inside

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